Pam
Biog

WILLIAM PATON

1886 – 1943

A Service of Commemoration

First Presbyterian Church

New York, N. Y.

NOVEMBER 12, 1943

11:30 A.M.

✠

Under the auspices of

THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
and
THE AMERICAN OFFICE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES

Order of Service

THE ORGAN PRELUDE

"Adagio from the 5th Sonata" *Guilmant*

THE INTROIT

"Hark, hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling" *Frederick W. Faber*

THE CHOIR

THE INVOCATION

JOHN R. MOTT

O God, who art, and wast, and art to come, before whose face the generations rise and pass away; age after age the living seek thee, and find that of thy faithfulness there is no end. Our fathers in their pilgrimage walked by thy guidance and rested in thy compassion; still to their children be thou the cloud by day, and fire by night. O thou sole source of peace and righteousness! Take now the veil from every heart, and join us in one communion with thy prophets and saints, who trusted in thee and were not ashamed. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

THE SCRIPTURE WITH RESPONSES

YI-FANG WU

The Leader: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father;

The People: **To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.**

The Leader: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.

The People: **And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.**

The Leader: Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him;

The People: **For we shall see him even as he is.**

The Leader: There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. And he gave some to be apostles; and some,

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Biog

WILLIAM PATON

A biographical statement read at the Service of Commemoration, November 12, 1943, First Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

William Paton was born in London on November 13, 1886, the son of John and Elizabeth Paton. He attended Whitgift Schol and Pembroke College, Oxford, receiving the degree of Master of Arts from Oxford University in 1908. He completed a course of theological study in Westminster College, Cambridge, in 1911. He was ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church of England and was a member of the Presbytery of London. In 1939 the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was given him by the University of Edinburgh.

During his Oxford days the direction of his life was determined in a mission conducted by Dr. John R. Mott, to whom he never ceased to confess his gratitude. From 1911 to 1919 he devoted himself to the service of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland as its missionary secretary. With his fine academic record and an inexhaustable fund of energy and enthusiasm, he proved in those years his gift of understanding and leadership and his dedication to the cause of worldwide Christianity and a missionary Gospel. Through all the succeeding years he continued to show his keen interest in the student Christian movements in every country because of the important place of the universities and colleges in that greatest task of the Church of winning the world for Christ.

In 1919 he went to India under the appointment of the Young Men's Christian Association. As the national secretary of the Associations in India his ability was widely recognized; and in 1922 in the reorganization of the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon under the leadership of Dr. J. H. Oldham, then the senior secretary of the International Missionary Council, Mr. Paton was invited to become the Secretary of the Council in India. In these years he began to acquire that first-hand knowledge of the problems of missionary administration and that understanding of other religions which, ever increasing and deepening, characterized his service to the world mission of the Church. This experience in India also gave the never-failing evangelistic emphasis in all his work a genuineness and sincerity that underlay its power.

Further recognition of his gifts of Christian statesmanship came in 1926 when the Committee of the International Missionary Council called him to become one of its secretaries and the editor of the *International Review of Missions*. One of his first tasks was to share in the preparation for the World Missionary Conference, planned at this same meeting, in Jerusalem in 1928. Ten years later with the other officers of the Council he shared in planning and directing the epochal meeting held at Tambaram, near Madras, India, in December, 1938. In the preparations for these two great meetings, in their organization and conduct, and in the subsequent carrying forward of their messages, through the editing of the larger part of the reports and through his own writing and speaking, Mr. Paton contributed greatly toward making them the most notable demonstrations yet given of the universal reality of Christianity. Thus they have become probably the most important influences in determining Christian strategy

for the imminent hours of trial and inspiring symbols of Christian hope for the future. So these meetings symbolize and summarize his work in the intervening years for the International Missionary Council.

As the ecumenical movement of the churches began to develop, his counsel was sought at every step. He had an influential part in the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences in 1937. When the World Council of Churches was projected, it was inevitable that he should be drafted as one of its General Secretaries. For that service he was lent by the International Missionary Council, thus assuring in his person an intimate connection between two major phases of the World Christian Movement—worldwide evangelism and ecclesiastical faith and order.

Concurrently with these heavy responsibilities in connection with the two world organizations of the Church, Mr. Paton gave generously of his time and energy to the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland, especially in regard to work in India, in relations with governments, and in the development of Chrstian literature, as well as counselling on all major issues. He was also an ardent promoter of the newly organized British Council of Churches and as chairman of its Committee on Administration and Finance was at the heart of its development.

Naturally drawn into close association with all inter-denominational movements in Great Britain, he was a familiar figure in many of the "Religion and Life" campaigns. With the outbreak of this world war he became a principal mover in church groups both in declaring what he saw to be the moral issues of the war and in studying the post-war settlements. His last visit to America in 1942 was primarily concerned with these issues. Besides all this he was active in giving assistance to refugee groups of Christians from the European continent and in service to prisoners of war. These many responsibilities, multiplying so rapidly in recent years, were discharged with a competence and despatch that confounded his associates.

His publications, in addition to his extensive editorial work were many and varied. They include: *Jesus Christ and the World's Religions* (1916); *Alexander Duff* (1922); *A Faith for the World* (1929); *The Faiths of Mankind* (1932); *Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts* (1937); *World Community* (1938); *The White Man's Burden* (1939); *The Message of the World-wide Church* (1940); *The Church and the New Order* (1941); *The Church Calling* (1942); as well as numerous magazine articles. At the time of his death he was contemplating a volume on post-war missionary policy.

Dr. Paton is survived by his wife, two daughters and four sons, the oldest of whom is in China as a missionary among university students, thus carrying forward his father's deepest interests.

The worldwide Chritian Church has lost a great leader, whose fine scholarship, breadth of vision, rich experience, ability to inspire confidence, abundant vitality and capacity for hard work, evangelistic purpose, loyalty to the church, and sincere, wholehearted devotion in the service of his Lord made him a most valued and trusted counsellor and colleague. With thanksgiving, in humble and undiscouraged faith, we look for those whom God will call to carry forward his work.

A. L. Warnshuis

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A. L. Warnshuis

prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:

The People: **Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**

The Leader: And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsover I commanded you:

The People: **And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.**

The Leader: Let us now praise famous men, by whom the Lord hath wrought great glory: Men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their understanding men of learning for the people. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore.

The People: **Therefore will the people tell of their wisdom and the congregation will show forth their praise.**

A BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

A. LIVINGSTON WARNSHUIS

THE PRAYER OF COMMEMORATION

HENRY PITNEY VANDUSEN

O God, who art the strength of thy saints and who redeemest the souls of thy servants, we call to remembrance thy loving kindness and thy tender mercies to this thy servant whom this day we commemorate. For all thy goodness that withheld not his portion in the joys of this earthly life, and for thy guiding hand along the way of his pilgrimage, we give thee thanks and praise. Especially we bless thee for thy grace that kindled in his heart the love of thy dear name; that enabled him to fight the good fight, to endure unto the end, and to obtain the victory; yea, to become more than conqueror, through him that loveth us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, who dost call men to far visions and high achievement, we bless thy name for the fruitful life of thy servant—for his profound knowledge, his discerning judgments, his untiring devotion, his catholicity of spirit, and for the effectiveness of his world-wide Christian leadership. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we who rejoice in the triumph of thy saints may profit by their example, that becoming followers of their faith and patience, we also may enter with them into an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE HYMN OF COMMEMORATION

Hymn 429 (3 verses)—"For all the saints, who from their labors rest"

William Walsham How

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION AND DEDICATION

HENRY SMITH LEIPER

The Minister: Almighty God, our Father in heaven, who dost hear the supplications of those who turn to thee with earnest and sincere desire, we offer our prayers for those great concerns of thy Kingdom which absorbed the strength and thought of thy servant. We come in gratitude and in the confidence that thou art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Minister: For the Church Universal into which William Paton was born, in which he was nurtured, and which he loved and served throughout his days,

The People: **We beseech thee to hear us.**

The Minister: For the ecumenical movement in which he was an inspiring genius, and to which he gave himself unceasingly,

The People: **We beseech thee to hear us.**

The Minister: For the world-wide mission of the Church which was his life-long passion, and for which he poured out his heart and soul and strength and mind,

The People: **We beseech thee to hear us.**

The Minister: Almighty God, who dost commit thine eternal purposes into the hands of frail and fleeting generations, and yet dost empower by thy Holy Spirit those who put their trust in thee, grant us in these momentous days a growing zeal for thy holy Gospel, and new power in the work of thy Church. Help us and all believers to witness a good confession that thy way may be known upon earth and thy saving health among all nations. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

THE HYMN OF FAITH

Hymn 345 (3 verses)—"Through the night of doubt and sorrow"

Bernhardt S. Ingemann
Tr. Sabine Baring-Gould

THE FINAL PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

JOHN R. MOTT

O thou who art the light of this world and the desire of all nations, let thy light shine in the darkness; and by the lifting up of thy cross gather the peoples unto thee; that all the ends of the earth may see thy salvation, one God world without end. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. *Amen.*

ORGAN POSTLUDE

"Adagio from the 6th Symphony" *Widor*

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

to

ORDER OF SERVICE

Bishop Baker, Honorary Chairman of the International Missionary Council, has wired as follows:

"Greatly regret inability to attend Paton Memorial. Shall be with you in spirit in profound appreciation of Paton's remarkable gifts and service to the Church Universal.

James C. Baker"

At the last moment Dr. Van Dusen was unavoidably prevented from taking part in the Service today and his place is being taken by Dr. Decker.

Pam Biog

No. 190

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

September 8th, 1943

DEAR MEMBER,

The cause of international Christian co-operation could hardly have suffered a more crippling blow than has befallen it in the sudden death, following on an operation, of Dr. William Paton.

WILLIAM PATON

It is not only that he possessed in rare combination gifts which it would be hard to match, but that, through service in India and subsequent visits to that country and to the Middle and Far East and through frequent travel to North America and the Continent of Europe, he had formed through twenty years bonds of friendship and mutual confidence with the leaders of the different Christian Churches throughout the world. Through these wide contacts he acquired a breadth of vision, ripeness of experience and maturity of judgment which made his counsel of quite exceptional value to the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, of both of which he was one of the joint secretaries, and to the recently formed British Council of Churches to which he was able in war time to devote a substantial part of his abundant energies.

One is apt from outside to think of these organs of co-operation as functioning more or less automatically, like machines, once they have been set going. Actually co-operation between the Churches is a new, tender and delicate growth. There is no reason whatever why the separate, independent bodies which co-operate in these organizations should continue to hold together unless fresh reasons for doing so are continually provided. The creative activities which supply these reasons require persons with imagination, capacity and freedom from other responsibilities to initiate and conduct them in a way that inspires general confidence. When the international conferences of representatives of the Churches at Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937 decided that steps should be taken to form a World Council of Churches, and an international meeting was held in Holland the following year to prepare a plan, the deciding factor for many concerned was that the services of Dr. Visser 't Hooft, Dr. Paton and Dr. H. S. Leiper could be secured as the joint secretaries. The general confidence they inspired made the move possible.

My friendship with Bill Paton began more than thirty years ago, when for a decade he was the missionary secretary of the Student Christian Movement in this country, and our common interests brought us into constant contact with one another. In 1921 he accepted an invitation from the Y.M.C.A. in India to take charge of its national

work for students and to help to develop an Indian Student Christian Movement.

I visited India about the same time on behalf of the International Missionary Council, of which I was the secretary, landing in India a month after Paton. The purpose of my visit was to find out how the National Christian Council of India, which had been formed as the result of a visit by Dr. John R. Mott just before the last war, and which represented all the Christian Churches and missions in India except the Roman Catholic, might be strengthened and provided with an adequate staff. I visited all the eight provinces of India and discussed the matter with leading Indian Christians and missionaries in each. When the National Christian Council met it became clear that notwithstanding the shortness of his Indian experience the one man whom everyone trusted and wanted as secretary was William Paton. Indian Christians and missionaries were equally decided about the matter. The difficulty was how he could be released from a highly important work which he had entered upon only a few months before. Those in charge of the student work of the Y.M.C.A. were men of wide vision and decided that the larger good of the Christian cause as a whole must have precedence.

The following incident illustrates the spirit of co-operation which prevailed. During the meetings of the National Christian Council the three leading Anglican bishops in India asked if they might have a talk with me. They told me that it was in their view essential that there should be in India such a body as the National Christian Council; that, if it was to be effective, it must obviously have at least one full-time officer; that they, like every one else, were convinced that Paton was the man for the job; that it was plainly very difficult for the Y.M.C.A., having brought Paton out to India for an important task, to release him after only a few months; and that—so important did the whole matter seem to them—they wanted me to know that if there was any man in the service of Anglican missions, whom the Y.M.C.A. would be willing to appoint to the student work and so find it easier to release Paton, they would do everything in their power to facilitate the transference of that man to the service of the Y.M.C.A.

After Paton had been in India for five years and had placed the National Christian Council on a solid foundation, the International Missionary Council found that the only way in which it could hope to cope with the tasks opening before it was by re-enforcing its staff. Once again the thoughts of all concerned turned to Paton. The only ground for hesitation was a reluctance to take him away from India, where he counted for so much. The deciding factor in a difficult decision was his duty to his six young children. He joined the staff of the International Missionary Council in 1927. For ten years we enjoyed a close colleagueship, till the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937 made demands which took me from the service of the International Missionary Council. While from that time we served different organizations, they were so closely related that we remained in constant touch with one another and our collaboration was increasingly close in recent months.

By every human calculation the whole Christian front has been seriously weakened by the removal of William Paton from a key position. It seems certain that important things that his imagination, initiative and executive ability would have made possible will in fact remain undone. He was equipped in a unique degree to take the lead in re-creating international friendships and international co-operation after the war. Nothing is gained by disguising from ourselves that the effects of his loss will be grave and far-reaching. It is a mistake to suppose that Christians and Christian causes are exempt from the tragic element in human life which allows particular incidents to have catastrophic consequences. To take the most obvious illustration, the death of the Prime Minister in 1940 might have changed adversely the whole course of the war.

So irremediable a loss is a reminder that God's ways are not our ways. To know how little we see of the total picture and how far astray may be our estimate of what is important, and to trust where we cannot see, is, perhaps, the beginning of wisdom. We may believe also that we are nearer to the truth of things when we do not dwell too much on what we have lost, but rather give thanks to God for His gift of William Paton to the universal Church.

COMMUNIST TACTICS

The following letter has reached me from "Nicodemus," the author of *Midnight Hour*, who has just published a volume of essays entitled *Renascence*,[1] which are studies of some of the main movements in the thought of to-day and seek to "relate real religion to real life," and which he has done us the honour to dedicate to the Christian News-Letter :—

"Alice Cameron, in a Supplement to the C.N-L., writes of 'certain communist methods,' i.e. that of 'discrediting fellow workmen or labour representatives with whose ideas or influences the Party do not agree, traducing his motives and exaggerating or misconstruing all his actions in an evil sense,' and of 'using' people, in the sense that 'someone who apparently has nothing in common with them is suddenly courted and caressed until he has given them some support or help, after which if he is no longer useful he may be dropped.'

"What seems surprising to me in this account is, not the great probability that it is true, but the naïve assumption that such conduct is confined to communists. I have little knowledge of communists and, therefore, cannot check the veracity of her statement, but if it were to be applied to circles of distinction, culture and even religious repute in our world, perhaps to many of those who will read this Supplement and rejoice at such a confounding of communism and be comfortably confirmed in their conservatism and anti-communism, every word of it could be endorsed. It is the normal method by which those in power, position or authority discredit, use and drop those who will not conform or who threaten their security of mind or estate. The only difference between the conservative (and often enough the christian) and the communist is that the former is mostly either unconscious of what he

[1] Faber and Faber, 8s. 6d.

is doing or deceives himself as to the political or religious necessity of such conduct, while the communist (like the nazi and fascist) knows quite well what he is doing and does not pretend that it is a moral method. On the whole, the candid cynicism of the communist seems more pleasant than the covert kind of his opposites.

"This is just plain original sin. When first one realizes it as the ubiquitous thing it is, as most rampant where virtue, piety and repute seem most plausible, as, to our horror, a blindworm in ourselves crawling its corrupt way through all our most cherished 'good works,' one is liable to 'curse God and die' till one looks at the Cross where this slimy thing was slain. Then we can face the nasty facts of human nature with that charity which, as Pascal said, is God's realism. But for God's sake, don't let us run away with the idea that the broad phylacteries of the conservative, the Christian and the gentleman make him more immune from such 'methods' than the communist, or use a stick with which we should beat our own backs to belabour political opponents."

This is a most salutary warning against our inveterate tendency to locate evil in those whom we dislike and to forget its ubiquitous nature and its presence and power in ourselves. This does not mean—nor, I am sure, does "Nicodemus" mean—that we are to dismiss as unimportant all differences between nobler and baser traditions in the social and political spheres. Miss Cameron's purpose was to call attention to the significance of these differences in one particular instance.

THE SUPPLEMENT

The Supplement this week deals with the responsibility of power in the economic system. It has been prepared by a small group associated with the Christian Frontier, the members of which are all connected in one way or another with industry and are all young. The purpose of the present paper is to define the problem by an analysis of economic power and its relevance to existing conditions. No suggestions of reforms or remedies are put forward at this stage. The group intends to continue the study of the subject. If any of you have anything to contribute to the discussion, it will be passed on to the group for their consideration.

Yours sincerely,

J. H. Oldham

Subscriptions—12s. 6d. ($3.00 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year. 6s. 6d. for six months (Great Britain and Ireland only). Single copies 6d. (to No. 178, 4d.): reduction for quantities.

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Published by Dr. J. H. Oldham for the Christian Frontier Council, and printed in Great Britain by the Church Army Press, Cowley, Oxford.

Please be good enough to share this with the publications of your denomination which would like to publish something about Dr. Paton. Additional copies may be obtained from the International Missionary Council, if necessary.

International Missionary Council
156 Fifth Avenue
New York, 10, N.Y.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DR. WILLIAM PATON

WORLD CHRISTIANITY suffered an inestimable loss on August 21, 1943, in the death of the Reverend William Paton, D.D., Secretary of the International Missionary Council since 1927, and joint secretary since 1938 of the provisional committee of the World Council of Churches.

Dr. Paton's rich experience, his breadth of vision, his fine scholarship, his abundant vitality and ability to inspire confidence, and his infinite capacity for work will make his loss keenly felt at every turn in the days ahead. To his many colleagues in the worldwide mission of Christianity his death will be a source of deep personal grief.

Dr. Paton was born in London on November 13, 1886, the son of John and Elizabeth Paton. He received his M.A. with honors from Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1908, and spent a further year of study at Westminster College, Cambridge, in 1911. His honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was bestowed upon him by the University of Edinburgh in 1939.

From 1911 to 1922 Dr. Paton was Missionary Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland and went to India under the Y.M.C.A. in 1919. His brilliant record attracted the attention of those concerned with developing the organization of the National Christian Council of India, Burma & Ceylon, and he was invited to become its secretary in 1922. He held that post until the Rätvik meeting of the International Missionary Council in July 1926 called him to a wider sphere as secretary of the International Missionary Council and editor of the International Review of Missions.

He assumed his new duties in the spring of 1927 and was intimately associated with Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, the secretary of the Council in New York, in all the preparations for the great Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1928 and in the direction of the meeting itself. Ten years later, again in close association with Dr. Warnshuis, he planned and directed the epochal meeting held at Tambaram,

(more)

Madras, India, in December 1938. At the close of the meeting he edited the seven volumes that, in effect, sum up the fullest information and the best thinking of the era in the missionary movement which came to an end with the beginning of the present war.

In his capacity as secretary of the International Missionary Council, Dr. Paton paid many visits to the United States, and hundreds of mission and church leaders came to know, to appreciate and to trust him. On several occasions he combined lecture or preaching tours with his trips. The last of these occurred in the first part of 1942 when he toured the country on a preaching mission under the auspices of the Federal Council of Churches.

His loss will be keenly felt in British church circles, as well as in the international Christian world, for Dr. Paton was active in many phases of British church life. In addition to his many and heavy duties as secretary of the International Missionary Council and of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Paton also carried official responsibility for Indian affairs and some other major matters for the British Conference of Missionary Societies. A member of the Presbyterian Church of England, he enjoyed the confidence of the Anglican Church and of the Free Churches as well. He was an ardent promoter of the newly organized British Council of Churches and one of the principal movers in a church group which is studying the post-war peace settlement. Recently he had been instrumental in securing a private gift of 24,000 pounds sterling to be divided among Christian Literature, the postwar work of the International Missionary Council, the World Council of Churches, the British Council of Churches, The China Christian Colleges, student evangelism in China. The multiplicity of his contacts with British governmental authorities was amazing, and in all of these he was trusted and most influential. He was in intimate contact with the refugee governments in London as well, and also with the various refugee groups of continental Christianity.

His publications, in addition to his extensive editorial work were many and varied. They include: Jesus Christ and the World's Religions (1916); Alexander Duff (1922); A Faith for the World (1929); The Faiths of Mankind (1932); Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts (1937); World Community (1938); The White Man's Burden (1939); The Message of the World-wide Church (1940); The Church and the New Order (1941); The Church Calling (1942); as well as numerous magazine articles. At the time of his death he was contemplating a volume on post-war mission policy.

Dr. Paton is survived by his wife, four sons and two daughters.

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